



## News Release

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### **Take a “Walk in the Park”**

*Get active while enjoying the beauty of Utah’s state parks*

(Salt Lake City, UT) –Why exercise indoors when you could be getting “green exercise” in the beautiful surroundings of one of Utah’s state parks? Research shows that exercising in nature has positive health effects, including lowering blood pressure and improving mood. The Utah Department of Health, (UDOH) Utah State Parks and the Utah State Office of Tourism are sponsoring a “Walk in the Park” competition to encourage Utahns to get outside.

Beginning June 7, participants can register for the “Walk in the Park” contest at [www.utahwalks.org](http://www.utahwalks.org). It’s simple: just log all the miles you walk in any Utah State Park from June 7, 2008 through September 30, 2008. Credit will also be given for other physical activities like hiking and biking, as long as they are done in a state park.

“The goal of this program is to encourage Utahns to get active and at the same time enjoy the scenery of Utah’s 43 state parks,” said Lynda Blades, Physical Activity Coordinator, UDOH.

A new “Gold Medal Mile” walking path was recently created at Wasatch Mountain State Park. The mile begins at the visitor’s center and ends at Huber Grove, where visitors can learn more about the Huber family’s historic farmhouse and creamery, which were established in the late 1800s.

Inauguration events for the path, along with the kick-off for the competition, will be held on National Trails Day, Saturday, June 7, 2008 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Wasatch Mountain State Park in Midway.

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UDOH Executive Director Dr. David Sundwall, an avid walker himself, will inaugurate the trail. Special guest Miss Wasatch Christina Lowe will also be there to help kickoff this new fitness effort. Walkers are allowed to bring dogs on the trail, provided the animals are on a leash. Healthy snacks, t-shirts and other giveaways will be provided.

More information on activities that count toward the competition can be found on [www.utahwalks.org](http://www.utahwalks.org) or at the Utah State Parks Website at [www.stateparks.utah.gov](http://www.stateparks.utah.gov).

Prizes will be awarded to the top three competitors logging the most miles at the end of each month.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*